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16 August 1948

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1. Shortly before June 27, a Catalina flying boat belonging to Major Cobly, a retired British officer, anchored off the BOAC seaplane wharf at Klongtoi, Bangkok. (C-1).
2. Cobly has been running arms and other contraband from Singapore and other areas in Malaya to Indonesian Republic territory in Java and Sumatra. On his most recent flight from Republican territory to Singapore, he was refused permission to dock there, and was prevented from landing by British fighter planes. (C-2). Cobly then flew to Bangkok. While anchored at Bangkok, he had no guards on his plane and some parts were stolen from the engine. He is now endeavoring to obtain replacements so he can take off.
3. Cobly has been using Soekhla (100-35, 7-10), Siam as a base from which to take off for the NEI (C-6).
4. John Coast has had a heated "jurisdictional" dispute with Cobly. Inasmuch as Coast is supposed to be handling the Republican efforts to break the Dutch blockade by air, he has demanded that Cobly clear all his flights and projected activities through him. Cobly has refused to comply with this demand on the ground that he is a free lance.

Washington Comment. The Bangkok Press of 5 July 1948 reported that after flying into Siamese territory for a second time without permission, an Australian-registered and privately-owned Catalina flying boat had been held by Siamese authorities pending investigations. The three-man crew, R.R. Cobley, I.B. Smith and C.S. Jeffrey, was reported to be staying temporarily in Bangkok. The press on 7 July reported that if the Australian Consul General in Bangkok confirmed that the Catalina was Australian registered, the Siamese authorities would release it. The Siamese police the press reported, believed the plane was either owned by or chartered by Indonesians for use in Indonesia.

This document is hereby regraded to CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the letter of 16 October 1978 from the Director of Central Intelligence to the Archivist of the United States.
Next Review Date: 2008

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